

## CLAIMS

1. Washing appliance comprising a tank (2) for loading washing liquor and items to be washed and control means adapted to carry out a predetermined washing program, characterised in that it comprises an inclined drain surface (2a) for collecting a portion of the washing liquor and means (6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) for assessing properties of such liquid on the basis of the drainage behaviour thereof.
2. Washing appliance according to claim 1, wherein the inclined surface consists of a defined area (2) limited by guide rails (4) and an inlet system (5) to a measuring instrument (6).
3. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein the defined area (2a) is located on the inside a tub (2) of the washing machine.
4. Washing appliance according to claim 1, wherein more than one inclined surface (2a) are used, arranged at different angles.
5. Washing appliance according to claim 4, in which the signals from measuring instruments (6) corresponding to different surfaces at different angles are used for adjustments or for internal reference of the measuring system.
6. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein the determination of the amount of a draining film of washing liquor is performed over a defined time period in the measuring instrument (6), this latter comprising a storage vessel, which can be emptied in defined time intervals and is fed by the draining washing liquid.
7. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein the determination of the amount of the draining film is performed over a defined time period by an optical fill level gauge, the measuring instrument (6) containing a storage vessel (8) which can be emptied in defined time intervals and is fed by the draining washing liquid.
8. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein the lower end of the drain surface (2a) is arranged in such a manner that the draining liquid leaves it in the form of drops and a measured quantity is determined from the number of the drops per time unit and their size.
9. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein the end of the drain surface (2a) is designed in such a manner that the draining liquid film gathers to a continuous fluid stream (W), and the conductivity of this stream is determined by a suitable measuring instrument (9).
10. Washing appliance according to claim 9, wherein the discharge (7) from the drain surface (2a) serves as the first electrode and a receptacle (8) serves as the second electrode and

that the diameter of the water stream (W), flowing from the discharge to the receptacle, is determined by a conductivity measurement.

11. Washing appliance according to claim 2 and 10, wherein a capacitive sensor is used for measuring the drain behaviour, the electrodes of the capacitive sensor being positioned outside the tub.

12. Washing appliance according to claim 2, wherein a capacitive sensor is used for measuring the drain behaviour, the electrodes of the capacitive sensor being positioned at the lower edge of the drain surface, in a feed canal for the measuring instrument, or in a collecting vessel in the measuring instrument itself.

13. Washing machine according to claim 12, wherein the kind of the electrodes is designed in such a manner that a conductive measurement can be performed too.

14. Process for controlling the program of a washing appliance, such appliance comprising a tank (2) for loading washing liquor and items to be washed, characterised in that it comprises the steps of collecting a portion of the washing liquor on an inclined drain surface (2a) and assessing properties of such liquid on the basis of the drainage behaviour thereof.